

SPECIAL
ARTICLES

Our Contributors

BOOK
REVIEWS

ATTAINING THE RESURRECTION.

By Rev. E. W. Watson.

Of the certainty of our Lord's Resurrection we have sure and convincing proof in the change that came over the Apostles and in the existence of the Christian church to-day. If there had been no Resurrection, we should have had no Sunday, no New Testament, no Christian Church. The historical proof of the Resurrection is complete and satisfactory, but there is a better proof still for the Living Christ can and does make Himself known to men to-day. They hear His voice and know His power to save. It is possible to meet with Christ, to have as real a meeting as Paul had—not in blinding splendor, but in spiritual power. Our Lord's Resurrection is a pledge of ours, for ours is made certain by His. As it is a great and glorious fact that our Lord Jesus "Christ was raised from the dead thro' the glory of the Father," we know that God "will raise us up thro' His power."—(1. Cor. VI. 14.)

Our Lord Himself said, "the hour cometh when all that are in the tombs shall hear His voice and shall come forth."—(John V. 28, etc.) St. Paul assures us that "there shall be a resurrection both of the just and of the unjust."—(Acts 24:15.)

So we have come to believe that the Resurrection is an event which will come to all at once. As the sunrise brings day to us all, so we think the Resurrection will be the awakening of all from the sleep of death at the end of time. But if this is so, why should Paul write as he did, "If by any means I may attain to the resurrection from the dead," and why did our Lord in speaking to the Sadducees say, "they that are accounted worthy to attain to . . . the resurrection from the dead."—(Luke 20:35)?

Do not these words teach us that the Resurrection depends upon worthiness and imply that those who are not accounted worthy will not attain to it? Yet we know our Lord taught just as clearly that all should rise and come forth—they that have done good unto the resurrection of life and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment.—(Jno. V. 29.) There are then two Resurrections—one of life—the other of judgment.

From St. Paul's words we learn that the resurrection is to be attained by effort. Clearly, he must have thought about the resurrection in a different way than we do or he would not have written thus. Now, unless striving or not striving came to the same thing, the results of striving and not striving must be different.

The Resurrection Paul strove to attain cannot be attained by those who do not strive. And yet Paul declared to Felix that there should be a resurrection both of the just and of the unjust. The only conclusion possible is that the resurrection of life, in the full sense, is only attained by effort.

A resurrection of judgment awaits the unjust and all who do not strive for the "better resurrection." In this world we know and say that there is life, which is not life—an existence so full of pain, privation and sorrow that it scarcely deserves the name of life, so there is a Resurrection to a state of life so full of misery that it does not deserve the name of Resurrection.

The words of St. Paul teach us that the Resurrection is not so much an event, as a process—and a result of spiritual growth. Paul goes on to say—"Not that

I have already obtained or am already made perfect." Paul teaches us that the attainment of the Resurrection is a present concern. It must be attained in this life. Paul was striving to reach a certain spiritual condition before his life here came to an end, so that when he died he might attain to the resurrection from among the dead and be prepared to enter at once upon the life of heaven. And we know that he did obtain his desire, for in his last letter he wrote: "Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness."—(2. Tim. 4:8.)

But when did Paul expect to attain to the Resurrection? Was he looking to some far distant event at the end of the age? Surely not, for he wrote: "we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."—(2. Cor. V. 1, etc.) and he had "a desire to depart and to be with Christ, for it is very far better."—(Phil. 1. 23.)

There are some who think that Paul has not got his heavenly body yet, but he wrote: "we have a building of God, a house not made with hands." He did not write—we shall have—but "we have," and it seems plain that he expected to move from the earthly body into the heavenly, and the thought of death, not as an unclipping of the spirit, but as a "being clothed upon."—(2. Cor. v. 4.) Death only sets the spirit free from our present perishable body that it may be clothed upon with a spiritual body suited for its spiritual life.

Science teaches us that there is no break—no halt in the progress of life, and that life here is marked by a constant onward movement. If, after death, a Christian entered upon a bodiless state of existence, he would surely be worse off than he is here.

But to be "absent from the body is to be present with the Lord," which "is very much better," and St. Paul assures us that there is a spiritual body. 1. Cor. XV. 44. Just as certainly as there is a natural body now, so there is a spiritual body. We think of spirit and body as the opposite of each other, but St. Paul wrote of a "spiritual body." Surely he meant that there is a body suited to the needs of the spirit, (pneuma) just as our present bodies are suited to the needs of the soul, (psyche.)

Some of our philosophers have taught us that the body, even here, takes its form from the soul and that the soul moulds the body into its own likeness.

In the life to come, it may be that the defects and deformities of the spirit may be manifested in the spiritual body. We pity those who come into this world, blind, or deaf or dumb. How much more are they to be pitied, who enter on the life beyond death with their spiritual life undeveloped.

To be without faith here is to be blind there; to be without love, is to be a helpless cripple. How then, shall we live that we may attain to the resurrection from the dead? As St. Paul lived who counted all things but loss, that he might gain Christ and be found in Him."—(Phil. III. 8 and 9.)

Grand Mere, Que.

If you are discouraged about your work read the one hundred and twenty-sixth Psalm.

If you are all "out of sorts," read the twelfth chapter of Hebrews.

If you are losing confidence in men, read the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians.

SPARKS FROM OTHER ANVILS.

Christian Guardian: To all God's children comes the call to self-denial. Let us not face it with fear and trembling! Let us not turn away from it with dislike and loathing! Let us not speak, nor even think of it, as something peculiar to our faith! It belongs to man as man. The higher is ever rooted in the death of the lower, and joy itself thrives best in an atmosphere of self-denial. Not sadly and tearfully, not reluctantly and with murmuring, but with light in the eyes, and love in the heart, and a song on our lips, let us bend to our cross, and, lifting it, let us follow Him, whose footsteps led by the way of sorrows to the city of joy.

Cumberland Presbyterian: No one can doubt that the existence of the saloon makes it harder to keep the youth of the land from the debasing and degrading drink habit. Laws which abolish the saloon will make it easier to save the young men.

Herald and Presbyterian: Great is that man who, to greatness of intellect and culture, adds the simple-heartedness which makes it possible for him to be a child of God and a prince in prayer.

United Presbyterian: The minister of the gospel may not have chosen his profession because it was one toward which his heart yearned. Other callings may have appealed to him. But for some reason, possibly unknown, or unappreciated, he entered the seminary and the years of his active ministry showed a manifest presence of the power of the Holy Spirit. Even though he may have entered the sacred calling with a divided judgment the call was none the less from God. The Holy Spirit came to him in a round-about way: through the love of a mother, or the prayers of a father, or the death of a friend, or the defeat of a cherished ambition. Who can say by what channel God entered the human heart and makes it obedient to his will?

Westminster, Philadelphia: Two ministers may be located side by side. One is a great scholar, compared with whom the other is an absolute blank. The scholar is not popular. He feeds a little flock. Not so with his neighbor. His church is full. The world calls him a "soul winner." The reason is near at hand. One can tell what he doesn't know better than the other can tell what he does. There is a sixth sense, whose office it is to apply the other five. And to this is largely due the secret of success. We doubt if any one ever acquired it. Genius has many forms, and this is one.

The West-land: There comes a time when the truest application of the Gospel to practical affairs is that of a courageous crusade against oppressors and grafters, and the man who leads such a crusade is no less a preacher of righteousness than the man in the pulpit. It is possible to compliment the pulpit on the theory that its vocation is to preach but not to meddle with business; and that kind of appreciation is the poorest of praise.

Presbyterian Witness: Theology is excellent in its place; exposition and criticism are invaluable; worship is essential to the being and well being of the Church; but the Redeemer, the Saviour, is Christ only. The "Salvation Army" is not perhaps an attractive agency to men of culture, but it is in the main loyal to Christ and hence fitted to do true work. Campbell, of London, so eloquent, so earnest, is trying to form a new sect, but he has no true Divine centre of attraction around whom to rally the weary and heavy-laden; for rest, he cannot found even a sect of lasting influence and power on mere fault finding.